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ABSTRACT

In November 1988, a study was conducted to identify factors contributing to the quality of life of retired persons in southeast Kansas. A random sample of 366 Labette County residents over 59 years of age was surveyed by mail regarding their social life, housing, income, health, and the social and economic environment in Kansas. Study findings, based on a 36.6%, response rate included the following: (1) the average age of the respondents was 71 years; (2) 76.5% were female, and 90.9% were retired; (3) when asked about their social life, 86.6% of the respondents indicated that they spent time with friends and 85.8% participated in church activities; (4) 18.5% worked part time, 3.1% worked full time, and 20.8% were interested in finding part- or full-time employment; (5) 97.5% believed that Labette Community College was doing an adequate job of meeting the needs of retired citizens; (6) respondents expressed the most interest in retirement seminars, exercises classes, and art appreciation classes; (7) about half of the respondents who lived in their own residence were concerned about maintaining it, citing finances, home repairs, and/or yard work as problems; (8) the average monthly income was $1,016; (9) overall, 96% of the respondents felt that Kansas was a good place for retirement; (10) though 56% said they had no health or physical handicaps, 75.4% regularly used prescription drugs; and (11) among the concerns identified in the survey were needs for Senior Citizens' Centers in each town, adequate transportation, low-cost housing, convenient shopping, and more activities for the elderly. The survey instrument is included. (AJL)

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Assessment of Services for Retired and Senior Citizens in Labette County (A Pilot Study)

By

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Labette Community College
Office of Research and Planning
and
Labette Center for Mental Health Services, Inc.
Parsons, Kansas

March, 1989

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Purpose

Population demographics show that the median age for Americans and Kansans will continue to increase through the year 2000. With this increase will come a greater demand for public services and programs to serve older citizens. The purpose of this survey is to identify some needs and requirements of southeast Kansas citizens in their retirement age.

In 1990 there will be 451,508 persons over the age of 60 residing in the state of Kansas. This represents 18.1% of the total population (Table I). Within southeast Kansas about 25% of the population or 38,600 will be over 60 years old (Table II). Although the population growth for southeast Kansas is at a negative rate (-2.9%), the number of persons in the upper age group is increasing. The state population growth is +5.6%.

TABLE I
NUMBER OF PERSONS AGE 60 OR OVER
STATE OF KANSAS

Year	60-64	65-74	74+	Percent Population
1960	91,595	149,714	90,555	15.2%
1970	101,344	154,418	111,783	16.3%
1980	106,667	172,495	133,514	17.5%
1990*	114,941	181,657	154,910	18.1%
2000*	122,476	193,047	176,386	18.9%

*Projected population

TABLE II
POPULATION IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS

County	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Growth
Cherokee	22,279	21,549	22,304	22,316	22,359	0.5%
Crawford	37,032	37,850	37,916	37,212	36,914	-1.9%
Labette	26,805	25,775	25,682	25,404	25,444	-1.1%
Montgomery	45,007	39,949	42,281	40,376	39,171	-4.5%
Neosho	19,455	18,812	18,967	17,916	17,209	-5.6%
Wilson	13,077	11,317	12,128	11,404	10,954	-6.0%
Total	163,655	155,252	159,278	154,628	152,051	-2.9%

The purpose of the Senior Citizens Survey was to identify some factors which contribute to the quality of life for retired persons in southeast Kansas. The assessment was obtained through an instrument developed by the joint efforts of Labette Community College and Labette Center for Mental Health Services.

The information compiled will help to establish a data base or documentation of needs and services required by the senior citizens. It will also serve to evaluate the present services and identify any strengths or concerns that should be addressed. The data will be helpful to all agencies serving senior citizens in obtaining funding and support for programs.

Procedure

A random sample of 366 residents of Labette County with the age of 60 or over were mailed an assessment in December of 1988. The mailing lists were compiled from individuals who had attended Labette Community College and from local senior citizens organizations. The completed surveys were returned in a prepaid addressed envelope with the respondent remaining anonymous.

The response rate was 36.6% (N = 134). Assuming that the random sample was obtained from a normally distributed population, the maximum error for the estimate of the percentage averages for the data collected was calculated to be +/- 8% at the 95% confidence interval.

Demographics

The average age of the respondents was 71 years (S.D. = 6.58) with a range from 57 to 89 years old. Females comprised 76.5% of the respondents with males making up the difference of 23.5%. The largest percentage surveyed were married (48.5%) with 39.4% widowed and 12.2% either single or divorced.

Over 90.9% of the respondents were retired in Labette County. Before retirement 18.3% resided in other Kansas counties or states. The remainder (81.7%) resided and retired in Labette County. Of those individuals who had not retired, 85.7% plan to retire in Labette County.

Social

Table III presents a percentage distribution of the response to the question "What do you do for social life in southeast Kansas?" Spending time with friends (86.6%) and going to church functions (85.8%) were the two highest social activities noted. Special interest clubs, social drinking and watching sports were low interest social activities.

TABLE III
SOCIAL LIFE IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS

Activity	Number	Percent
Spend time with friends	116	86.6%
Church	115	85.8%
Spend time with relatives	101	75.4%
Eating Out	93	69.4%
Community College	87	64.9%
Hobbies	49	36.6%
Volunteer Work	44	32.8%
Social Clubs	42	31.3%
Recreation Center	35	26.1%
Special Interest Clubs	34	25.4%
Watching Sports	34	25.4%
Other	17	12.7%
Social Drinking	4	3.0%

Respondents found that there were many interesting things to do in southeast Kansas (90.7%). Besides the social activities listed above 18.5% worked part time and 3.1% worked full time in some occupation. Of the 78.5% who did not work, 20.8% were interested in finding part time or full time employment. About 50% thought that more recreational activities would be helpful. Some suggestions included singing groups, community get-togethers, concerts and exercise programs (See Appendix B, Question 13). Suggestions for improving social life included a senior citizens center, improved transportation so as to be able to visit friends and relatives, more planned activities and special events (Appendix B, Question 14).

With all the suggestions, 97.5% of the senior citizens believed that Labette Community College was doing an adequate job of providing services and meeting the needs of the retired citizens. Table IV lists some of the services the respondents believed that the community college should provide and would benefit the senior citizens. Among the highest responses taking trips was a service most believed should be provided by the College (61.9%). Sponsoring or supporting cultural events was selected by 37.3% as a service that the College should provide.

TABLE IV
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVICES

Services	Number	Percent
Trips	83	61.9%
Cultural Events	50	37.3%
Lectures	37	27.6%
Meeting Place	28	20.9%
Support Groups	19	14.1%
Learning Center	18	13.4%
Sporting Events	17	12.7%
Library Services	17	12.7%

Table V presents the types of classes the respondents were interested in participating. Among the highest rate of response were retirement seminars (38.1%), exercise classes (34.3%) and art appreciation (21.6%). Very little interest was shown for the academic type classes: psychology, sociology, political science and foreign languages.

TABLE V
COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSES

Type of Class	Number	Percent
Retirement Seminars	51	38.1%
Exercise	46	34.3%
Art Appreciation	29	21.6%
Health & Physical Fitness	28	20.9%
Nutrition	27	20.1%
Financial	25	18.7%
Cooking	24	17.9%
Music Appreciation	19	14.1%
History	17	12.7%
Woodworking	17	12.7%
Computer Classes	16	11.9%
Photography	9	6.7%
Other	7	5.2%
Special Interest Seminars	5	3.7%
Foreign Language	4	3.0%
Psychology & Sociology	3	2.2%
Political Science	1	0.7%

Housing/Finance

From the sample of senior citizens who responded 79.9% owned their home, 6.0% rented an apartment or house, and 14.1% lived in apartments or housing for the elderly. About half of the individuals who owned their home or rented an apartment or house were concerned about maintaining their present residence (55.3%). Concerns included financial support (21.6%), home repairs (27.6%) and yard work (32.1%).

In order to meet the needs of the elderly, 67.0% thought that there was a need for additional housing in southeast Kansas. The average ideal cost for renting was suggested to be $204.70 per month (S.D. = $89.43) with a range from $95.00 to $450.00 per month. The average ideal cost for purchasing a house was suggested to be $32,847 (S.D. = $15,666) with a maximum suggested cost of $60,000 per unit. When asked if the individual would be interested in purchasing and residing in housing designed for the retired person, 47.8% gave a negative response, 29.9% gave a positive response and 22.4% had no opinion.

The average income for the respondents was found to be $1,016 per month (S.D. = $731) with a range from $135 to $5,500 per month. Based upon the random sample, there is a 95% confidence the average income for persons 60 years or older was between $863 and $1,169. Over 81% of respondents believed that their present income was adequate enough to support them.

Southeast Kansas Environment

In order for a person to retire in a specific area, a variety of conditions need to be met. These include weather, standard of living, socialization, and attitude of residence toward the elderly. When the respondents were asked if they were treated with respect in southeast Kansas, 99.2% gave a positive response. When they were asked about the weather, 92.9% felt that the weather and seasons in southeast Kansas were just right for retirement living. Overall, 96% of the respondents believed southeast Kansas was a good area for retirement.

In addressing some of the needs to make it even better, 40.3% believe transportation was adequate for the senior citizens, 35.8% did not believe transportation to be adequate and 23.9% did not have any opinion. Stores, business, medical services, churches, post office, and other public buildings were accessible to 76.1% of the respondents. Suggestions were made concerning more handicapped parking places and ramps (Appendix B, Question 28).

In terms of shopping areas, quality of goods and services, 61.2% believe it was adequate for southeast Kansas. Improvement of services was recommended by 22.4% of the respondents. Suggestions include more variety, lower gasoline prices, and place more stores in a smaller area (e.g. mall) (Appendix B, Question 29).

Medical and Mental Services

One of the greatest concerns for senior citizens and the elderly is health care. Among the sample surveyed 56.0% had no health or physical handicaps, while the remainder (44.0%) had some handicap. Only 9.7% of the respondents had a physical handicap which required some type of assistance: cane, wheelchair or walker. Poor health conditions included: heart (20.1%), cancer (5.2%), diabetes (6.0%), arthritis (35.1%) and rheumatism (3.0%).

Over 80% of the respondents believe southeast Kansas provides excellent medical care for the retired and elderly person. While 15.7% believe southeast Kansas has good mental health care, there were 81.3% of the respondents who have not used the mental health services and have no comment.

Over 75.4% of the respondents used prescription drugs on a regular basis. Seventy percent used prescribed drugs on a daily basis while 24.6% did not use any drugs. Alcoholic beverages were not consumed by 67.9% of the respondents. Only 2.2% reported drinking alcohol on a regular daily basis. The remainder of the respondents drank alcohol occasionally.

Conclusion

Although the majority of the respondents resided in Labette County, the sample responses should give the agencies working with citizens 60 years or older some insight into

the needs of the citizens in southeast Kansas. The information gathered in this report substantiate a good retirement environment and the appropriate agencies should market southeast Kansas as such.

There are a few areas of concern that should be addressed in order to make the area more conducive for senior citizens. These concerns include:

(1) Senior Citizen Centers in each town;

(2) Adequate transportation;

(3) Retirement housing at low cost;

(4) Convenient shopping centers (e.g. malls)

(5) Handicapped accessibility;

(6) More community college involvement in travel and retirement seminars;

(7) More activities for the elderly - exercise, cultural and informational.

APPENDIX A

SENIOR CITIZENS/ RETIREMENT ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Labette Center
for Mental Health
Services, Inc.

Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

ADMINISTERED BY
LABETTE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND PLANNING
AND
LABETTE CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH
PARSONS, KANSAS

NOVEMBER, 1988

SENIOR CITIZENS/RETIREMENT ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Introduction:

Would you take a few minutes to answer the questions below about Southeast Kansas? The information we are seeking is related to the quality of life in Southeast Kansas for sixty and over or retired. We will see that the information obtained is made available to those individuals who are, or should be, in the business of working with the mature citizens. We will evaluate the answers to the questions and see what should be done to improve the programs and services in Southeast Kansas to make it more responsive to your needs. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous.

Demographics

1. Age of person completing survey:_____years old

2. Gender

   _____Male
   _____Female

3. Are you retired?

   _____Yes
   _____No

4. Are you married _____single_____divorced _____widowed _____

5. In what county do you reside at present time? _____

6. In what county did you reside before retirement? _____

7. If you are not retired where do you plan to retire?
   (county or state) _____

Social

8. What do you do for social life in Southeast Kansas? (Check all that apply)

   _____Church
   _____Community college
   _____Spend time with relatives
   _____Spend time with friends
   _____Recreation center
   _____Social clubs
   _____Special interest clubs
   _____Eating out
   _____Social drinking
   _____Watching sports
   _____Sports & hobbies (what kind? _____)
   _____Volunteer work
   _____Other _____

9. Do you find enough interesting things to do?

_____Yes
_____No

10 Do you work?

_____No
_____Part time
_____Full time

11. If you answered NO to question 10, would you like to work?

_____Yes
_____No

12. What do you feel you would enjoy doing that is not available now in your town or in Southeast Kansas?

_____

13. Do you see a need for more recreation or hobby activities in your town or in Southeast Kansas?

_____Yes
_____No

If yes, what kind? _____

14. Do you have any comments or suggestions for improving the social life of mature adults where you reside?

_____Yes
_____No

Suggestions: _____

15. Do you believe the community colleges are doing an adequate job of providing services to the retired citizens?

_____Yes
_____No

16. What services do you believe the community college could provide that would be of benefit to you? (Check all that apply)

_____Trips
_____Cultural
_____Sporting events
_____Lectureships
_____Library
_____Support groups
_____Meeting place
_____Learning Center (assistance in Adult Basic Education and community use of typewriters, computers, and magnifying equipment for reading)

17. What types of classes would be of interest to you? (Check all that apply)

_____History
_____Art Appreciation
_____Music Appreciation
_____Computer classes
_____Retirement seminars
_____Special interest seminars such as _____
_____Cooking
_____Nutrition
_____Exercise
_____Financial
_____Health and Physical Fitness
_____Psychology and Sociology
_____Foreign Language
_____Photography
_____Political Science
_____Woodworking
_____Other _____

Housing/Financing

18. Check what describes your residence best.

_____Own home
_____Rent house
_____Own your apartment
_____Rent your apartment
_____Live in an apartment for the elderly
_____Live with relatives
_____Other _____

19. Are you worried about keeping up with your present housing?

_____Yes
_____No

If yes, how? _____

_____Financially
_____Home repairs
_____Yard and outside work

20. Do you feel there is a need for additional housing for the mature adult in Southeast Kansas?

_____Yes
_____No

If yes, what kind and where? _____

_____

21. What do you consider your ideal cost for housing?

Rent: $ _____per month
Purchase: $ _____

22. Does your monthly income support you adequately?

_____Yes
_____No

Do you mind telling the amount per month? $ _____
(We will not know who you are so answers will not give personal identifying information.)

23. Would you be willing to purchase and reside in housing designed for the retired?

_____Yes
_____No

Environmental

24. Do you feel you are treated with respect in Southeast Kansas?

_____Yes
_____No

If not, where do you feel Southeast Kansas businesses, organizations, or others need to improve?

_____

25. Do you think the weather and seasons in Southeast Kansas are okay for retirement living?

_____Yes
_____No

26. Do you think this is a good area for retirement?

_____Yes
_____No

27. Is transportation adequate for the elderly in Southeast Kansas?

_____Yes
_____No

If not, what are your needs? _____

_____

28. Are stores, businesses, medical and mental health services, churches, post office, schools, city buildings, etc. easy to get to and easy to get around in?

_____Yes
_____No

If not, what needs should be changed or improved? _____

_____

29. Can you find quality goods and services in Southeast Kansas with good selection and fair prices?

_____Yes
_____No

If not, what are the problems you have had or have in shopping or getting services in Southeast Kansas?

_____

Medical

30. Does your health or physical condition handicap you?

_____Yes
_____No
_____Some

31. Please check any physical handicaps that you might have.

_____Have to use cane to get around
_____Have to use walker to get around
_____Have to use wheelchair to get around
_____Have a neurological disorder (palsy, etc.)

32. Please check any health condition that you might have.

_____Heart
_____Cancer (Type: _____)
_____Diabetes
_____Arthritis
_____Rheumatoid Arthritis
_____Muscular Disorders

33. Does Southeast Kansas have good medical care for the retired person?

_____Yes
_____No
_____Do not use medical services in Southeast Kansas

34. Does Southeast Kansas have good mental health care for the retired person?

_____Yes
_____No
_____Do not know

35. Do you use prescription drugs on a regular basis?

_____Yes; Circle one: daily, weekly, monthly
_____No

36. Do you drink alcoholic beverages?

_____Never
_____Occasionally
_____Regularly; Circle one: daily, weekly, monthly.

Office of Research and Planning
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APPENDIX B

Senior Citizens/Retirement Assessment Survey Responses

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Question: 8. What do you do for social life in Southeast Kansas?

Responses:

------- Art work.
------- Photography.
------- Independence Community Concert, out of town meals -- out of town group tours.
------- Work as pink lady at medical center, also St. Vincents DePaul, also take four neighbors to grocery store, bingo, church and nursing home.
------- Swimming and woodworking.
------- Enjoy plays, musicals, etc.
------- Bowling, sewing, camping.
------- Painting and gardening.
------- Bowl, fish, hunting, genealogy, read.
------- Carving and woodworking.
------- Art.
------- Baseball, oil painting.
------- Exercise, bridge.
------- Crafts of all kinds.
------- Historical society - republican politics.
------- Needlework.
------- Sewing, quilting, painting.
------- Handwork.
------- Golf.
------- Travel - better transit system is needed.
------- Football, camping club, basketball.
------- Walking, exercise class.
------- Music.
------- Ceramics.
------- AARP.
------- Auction sales, rummage sales
------- Art-landscape. Mechanic work, doughnut shop, auctions.
------- A good cheap place for retired people to eat.
------- Horseracing.
------- Water exercises at PSH&TC heated pool.
------- Cards.
------- Musical events.
------- Acrylic painting.
------- Playing piano for church, writing for the paper Senior Citizen news, helping at the center if needed.
------- Build bird houses and feeders.
------- Tennis and computers.
------- Traveling
------- Typing, african violets, and flowers outside.
------- Cross stitch.
------- Baseball.
------- Olympic games.
------- Rag basket.
------- Teach Sunday School.
------- Presbyterian Manor activities, bike riding.
------- Wood crafts.
------- Window shopping.
------- Camping by motorhome.

Senior Citizens/Retirement Assessment Survey Responses

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Question: 12. What do you feel you would enjoy doing that is not available now in your town or in Southeast Kansas?

Responses:

------- Better restaurants without smoke.
------- A place where senior citizens gather any day or time of the week.
------- Hobby and painting classes in Chetopa.
------- Genealogy.
------- Bus service or plane closer to my town Oswego Kansas.
------- Concerts and stageplays.
------- Swim in heated pool in the winter.
------- Shopping locally.
------- Move away.
------- Going to a cafe like Furrs in Muskogee.
------- Eat at a good cafe.
------- Closed mall for shopping with lots of stores.
------- Horseracing attendance.
------- Furniture refinishing.
------- Join a congenial reading or discussion group.
------- Concerts, etc. all types.
------- Travel on public transit.
------- Daily activities with other senior citizens in our community.
------- Walking and biking trails.
------- We need some culture entertainment.
------- Concerts - dinner theater.
------- There is too much to do now without something new added.
------- Learning to knit.
------- Be closer to a major airport, but that can't be achieved.
------- Movies - better shopping.
------- Babysitting with small babies only.

Question: 13. Do you see a need for more recreation or hobby activities in your town or in Southeast Kansas? If yes, what kind?

Responses:

------- More things that couples can do.
------- Looking forward to events to be held in renovated municipal auditorium.
------- Singing groups, quartets, etc.
------- Genealogy.
------- A place where older people can play golf that doesn't cost so much.
------- Craft classes.
------- I feel that there is a lot available but a lot of people do not take advantage of them.
------- Most any kind where you are in contact with other people.
------- Exercise programs - especially in winter.
------- People have different interests.
------- Art, music, sewing.
------- For the teenagers.
------- Need more space for existing activities.
------- Senior citizens activities.
------- Community get togethers.
------- Variety of concerts and programs in auditorium.
------- We desparately need a senior citizen center in Parsons.

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------- More for families.
------- Larger meeting place for senior citizens.
------- Hobby supplies available.
------- Knitting and someplace to meet and just to visit with others.
------- Daytime social activities at recreation center (play cards, casual games, sit and visit over coffee, etc.).

Question: 14. Do you have any comments or suggestions for improving the social life of mature adults where you reside? If yes, what suggestions?

Responses:

------- Senior citizen building.
------- Bring to town special speakers, USA band, musicals.
------- More involvement at Senior Citizens Center.
------- More money for rural and small towns transportation.
------- Better transportation -- buses or airplanes or both.
------- A need for a Senior Citizens Center.
------- Walk more.
------- A good meeting place for seniors.
------- More planned activities.
------- More transportation for those not driving.
------- They need to grow up and not think the world owes them everything.
------- I don't know anything about the social life of mature adults.
------- A center for older people.
------- Better transportation.
------- Adult day care center which would give spouse or other caregiver an occasional "day off".
------- We have no central organization of sr. citizens or a central meeting place. We are missing out on many programs available for senior citizens by not having a center.
------- Even though I can't carry a tune in a dump truck I would like to see a Senior Citizen Choir for gospel songs.
------- More senior dances and cards.
------- There is plenty of charity work to be done.
------- More free entertainment. They all like covered dish dinners.
------- Senior citizen building where we can meet at any time.
------- More senior citizens.

Question: 16. What services do you believe the community college could provide that would be of benefit to you?

Responses:

------- Pass to activities provided by the College. I would go to more college activities but really don't want to spend the money to see if I would like it.

Question: 17. What types of classes would be of interest to you?

Responses:

------- Tole painting and ceramics, canasta, cooking by microwave.
------- Planning to meet new tax guidelines, knitting and/or crochet.
------- Financial planning and investing.
------- Gardening.

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------- How to deal with certain situations.
------- Painting.
------- Cooking for diabetics and non sugar diets.
------- Dance - waltz, fox trot, polka, etc.

Question: 18. Check what describes your residence best.
Responses:
------- Son furnishes home.

Question: 19. Are you worried about keeping up with your present housing? If yes, how?
Responses:
------- Taxes too high.
------- Concerned but not worried.
------- The house needs fixing up but if I ask they will raise rent.
------- Real estate taxes are too high.
------- Not now, could be a problem in the future.
------- We have too much house.
------- Inflation takes more every year.
------- Not physically able to keep up.
------- We have an old home - difficult to heat and cool. Would like better housing if we could afford to do so.
------- Keeping house in good condition.
------- Always have to get someone to fix things. The yard gets bigger every year it seems.
------- Maintenance and some remodeling.
------- The price of food and medicare are too high.
------- Taxes and upkeep.
------- Property taxes are too high now.
------- I am too busy with various activities - the day is not long enough for a retired person. I am too busy helping others.

Question: 20. Do you feel there is a need for additional housing for the mature adult in Southeast Kansas? If yes, what kind and where?
Responses:
------- Not for low income but reasonably priced.
------- Roomy ground floor duplexes, condos, etc. with little or no yard and other maintenance required of occupants.
------- Ground floor living in or near town.
------- Housing where housekeeping is provided so people can stay at their own apartment or house. Maybe laundry too.
------- Like the Plaza Place where 17 block is in Parsons.
------- More apartments, condos, and retirement homes.
------- Low rent senior apartments.
------- Housing on ground floor like Altamont and Oswego have. Close to up town.
------- Resthomes.
------- Senior housing complexes.
------- I think resthomes could be watched more closely for cooking, and more care should be given to people in resthomes.
------- One story - possibly duplexes for middle income people.

Senior Citizens/Retirement Assessment Survey Responses

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------- Enlargement of Westside Homes in Oswego.
------- Like Belmont Towers or Plaza Place. Probably Parsons.
------- I have no way of knowing but understand there is always a waiting list at the senior housing.
------- One or two bedroom housing.
------- Apartments.
------- Apartments in a good part of town that are not government built.
------- Low income houses with yardwork help available.
------- More Senior Citizens Towers (a choice).
------- Apartments and duplexes closer to a shopping center.
------- I don't know, all I know is I don't want to live in a place like Belmont Towers or a nursing home.
------- On one level with own door to outside.
------- More home care.
------- I'm not really knowledgeable about this.
------- Housing for middle income people on ground floor or with elevators.
------- I think there is a need for supervised housing. The elderly seem not to care about the condition of their homes and tend to neglect them and themselves.
------- Apartments with reasonable rent.
------- Duplexes or similar to Westside Homes in Oswego.
------- Would prefer the one story type of apartment or housing available in some communities rather than the high rise apartments.
------- Ground level.
------- Two bedroom duplexes so you are on the ground floor and can have company to stay all night once in a while and you won't feel so compact.
------- Low funding housing for people with fixed income.
------- Need more small apartments with some supervision for couples to live with independent.
------- A complex cottage where one can mow yard, with flowers, or even put in a garden as now the only place is north 10th street. Need one on the west end of town.
------- Reasonably priced apartments for people who do not qualify for subsidy.
------- Ground floor apartments with recreation center and washing facility on block 17 here in Parsons.
------- Same as we have - will just need more in Parsons.
------- Garden type apartments with small garden spot near edge of town.
------- East of Belmont Towers, something not so high and all on the ground with a covered walkway between two buildings so older people don't have to get out in weather.
------- Handicap - low income.
------- Apartments with laundry facilities available in the apartment, and easily accessible.
------- Apartment complexes in Oswego.

Senior Citizens/Retirement Assessment Survey Responses

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Question: 24. Do you feel you are treated with respect in Southeast Kansas? If not, where do you feel Southeast Kansas businesses, organizations or others need to improve?

Responses:

------- Yes, but I tire of people talking so much about senior citizens.
------- Enforcement of no smoking in grocery stores.
------- A place for retired persons to eat.
------- Lower our real estate taxes.
------- There needs to be a less competitive spirit - a more supportive spirit - between businesses and people and towns. The effort should be to build the area not to destroy it.
------- The older I become the more vulnerable I feel.
------- Some businesses are not helpful in wanting to exchange merchandise if you take something back.
------- Competition for Wal Mart.
------- Grocery lines move too fast.
------- Parsons is different - have to have lived other places to understand but people mostly are great.

Question: 27. Is transportation adequate for the elderly in Southeast Kansas? If not, what are your needs?

Responses:

------- Adequate only if we own and can operate cars.
------- More busing.
------- Small towns do not have enough money to provide adequate transportation.
------- Bus service or more reasonable price for airplanes and closer access to.
------- Sometime would like to go shopping and to doctor.
------- Transportation for shopping (local) and out of Parsons.
------- Yes, at this time -- but if city loses funding for transportation, cab fare is too high.
------- As long as I can drive I have no transportation needs. I don't know what transportation is available.
------- As far as I know. We live on a farm out of Cherryvale.
------- More vans for going to the doctor, a grocery store, and to do other necessary errands.
------- For us it is. We drive our own car but I don't know about the people without cars.
------- Bus service - better air service.
------- More public transportation - taxi is too costly.
------- Have to hire someone to drive to Joplin, Pittsburg, etc. to make adquate connections.
------- Bus and air service (affordable).
------- Yes, in Parsons especially.
------- I have my own car, but some of these people don't have any way of getting around.
------- A bus for rural transportation.
------- Cab fare is way out of reach for people on fixed incomes. The transportation van is so busy for people going to eat.
------- Longer hours for the bus.
------- I don't know, I have my own car.
------- The van is hard for my friend to get on.

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------- Trips to doctors, shopping needs.
------- Connecting bus routes.
------- I live in rural area, and if I could not drive, I would have no transportation.
------- We need transportation to Joplin for doctors, shopping, etc. The Greyhound is too expensive.
------- Better air and bus service. Public transportation. It is extremely difficult to travel in and out of Parsons.
------- More public transportation.
------- Senior citizen's bus too hard for elderly to get in and out of.
------- Oftener or longer times for shopping.
------- Bus to Kansas City and Tulsa.
------- I never get to go to Coffeyville. Would like to be able to go to Coffeyville or Parsons once a week. Our van now goes once a month to Parsons.
------- Regular connections to airports in Tulsa, Wichita, and Kansas City.
------- Taxi service that is affordable to go to doctors, etc.
------- You can't get out of town unless you go to Joplin to have bus transportation.
------- Bus or other transportation out of town.
------- They say we have it, but don't know how to get it, etc.
------- May need help when I stop driving.
------- Bus service to other towns such as Coffeyville, Pittsburg, Joplin, etc.
------- It's not my need. I've heard others complain.
------- Better bus or cab service when weather is bad and I don't want to drive car.
------- We need more bus service or better yet "train service".
------- Bus service out and in - all directions.
------- Better ways of transportation from small villages and towns to Parsons, Coffeyville, and Pittsburg.
------- I am still able to drive so have no need yet, but when time comes that I can't drive, public transportation will be a need.
------- Definitely need the local van for local and hope and pray can maintain bus service evenings and weekends.

Question: 28. Are stores, businesses, medical and mental health services, churches, post office, schools, city buildings, etc. easy to get to and easy to get around in? If not what needs should be changed/improved?

Responses:

------- More handicapped parking places at grocery store.
------- We are in resthome, can get transportation if make it easier.
------- Something should be done to make crossings safer for persons going to meals.
------- In our town, not Parsons.
------- All buildings should have ramps. Handicap parking should be at all store and business including city buildings. This is all past due, city is at fault, should be enforced.
------- As long as we have a van provided by housing authority.
------- Post Office has all those steps.

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------- Scattered too far apart. For instance, ride the van to eye doctor then you have to call again to go somewhere else, etc.
------- Main street should be opened up.
------- Main street needs opened.
------- No stairs or steps.
------- We need drive-in window for water bills.
------- Nothing really could be reasonably done cost wise.
------- We need much improvement in the S.E. Kansas highway system. You take your life in your hands on some of the roads.
------- Post Office needs a ramp.
------- Transportation.
------- Steps should have a lift.
------- Some places are hard to get wheel chairs in.
------- Utility offices are not convenient.
------- Postal service west side of town. We need a good department store.
------- Give senior citizens more than 10% off, maybe 15% off and issue a state card with birthday and have an office of Kansas or city on card. Elderly need to be checked on more.
------- Don't doctor in this county. Don't live in town, so that doesn't bother me.
------- Get rid of the mall - that was the ruination of Parsons. If you are at one bank and want to go to the other you have to drive clear around 4 square blocks.
------- City building and post office have too many steps and hard to climb for a lot of seniors. I was greatly relieved when Consumers put in postal service.
------- Wheel chair accessibility.

Question: 29. Can you find quality goods and services in Southeast Kansas with good selection and fair prices? If not, what are the problems you have had or have in shopping or getting services in SE Kansas?

Responses:

------- Poor selection -- high prices.
------- Tall sizes not available -- expensive.
------- Parsons prices for gasoline are about the highest in state of Kansas.
------- Gasoline is higher by 11 cents per gallon than Pittsburg 12-4-88.
------- High and more sizes -- not good selection. People go out of town to shop.
------- No way to go.
------- Traveling so far to get to stores with good merchandise.
------- Not enough selection.
------- Need more clothing shops.
------- Poor interest of merchants.
------- Variety - prices.
------- Good dress clothes, also Montgomery Ward and other's repair men live in Joplin.
------- No selection - high prices - low wages.
------- We go to Joplin.
------- They aren't here. I go to Joplin.
------- My daughter gets them out of town.

Senior Citizens/Retirement Assessment Survey Responses

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------- High cost of groceries and gas.
------- Cannot deal with merchants in Parsons.
------- Good quality at reasonable price.
------- Groceries are too high in small towns, need a Wal-Mart.
------- We have to go outside of area to buy some things not available and have used medical services in larger cities.
------- Yes except buying a car.
------- Too expensive.
------- Selection of merchandise - Some stores in Missouri have the merchandise and it is cheaper. Clothes - not enough choices in sizes and the quality not satisfactory.
------- Need more selection - more stores.
------- Lack of selection.
------- Need department stores - Sears, Wards (walk in), Newberreys, etc.- like the good old days when main street was open.
------- Never go out of town to shop.
------- We could improve quality of good and price.
------- Wal Mart is our best all around store. Greaves new store is a good grocery store.
------- Clothing.
------- No craft store where you can buy or order any kind of craft materials.
------- At times services are a distance away.
------- Not clothes.
------- Small town - no "dime" stores - dress shops or fabric stores.
------- Cost mostly - we drive to Pittsburg or Joplin - especially for lower gasoline prices.
------- Grocery and bills are to high to pay each month.
------- Personally, I can. But Parsons people are very prone to shop out of town - this was noticeable when I moved here 25 years ago.

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